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Official Records

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New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Brown (Liberia) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meeting should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity.

As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323, of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by each speaker to the time limits in the Assembly, in particular during high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the "all protocol observed" principle is recommended whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements.

Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to all speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace, so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly. I therefore appeal for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the time limits for statements so that all those inscribed can be heard in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Adaljiza Albertina Xavier Reis Magno, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Ms. Xavier Reis Magno (Timor-Leste): It is a privilege to be given a chance to voice the views of my country, Timor-Leste, on the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda.

I wish to also express the full support of Timor-Leste to the Secretary-General for having initiated the necessary reforms to the management system, the United Nations development system and the peacebuilding architecture so as to make the United Nations fit for purpose and effective in its work on prevention and on sustaining peace.

Timor-Leste believes that sustaining peace requires an integrated framework and at that at the national level there must be ownership and involvement by all sectors of society, in particular women and young people. We have been encouraged by the fact that these factors have been considered and the focus of discussion within the past two days.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

As a country that emerged from violent conflict and understands very well the drivers of conflict, Timor-Leste's approach to sustaining peace has involved developing policies for inclusive and sustainable development.

As a post-conflict country, Timor-Leste has had to reconcile with its painful past by healing wounds and promoting peace with our closest neighbour. National reconciliation and reconciliation with that neighbour have been, in our experience, fundamental to sustaining peace. As stated by our former President, Xanana Gusmão, we first looked within and used our traditional methods to heal and reconcile before we were ready to reach out to and reconcile with the outside.

As we rebuild our country from the ashes, our society is transforming and urbanizing. We have a young population, 70 per cent of which is made up of young people born during the conflict era who had experienced an interrupted education and required special attention, as they will be the next generation and our future. This effort is aimed at securing social resilience for sustainable development and ensuring that our society is conflict-free. This will enable us to focus on socioeconomic development so as to improve the livelihood of our people and fulfil our motto, which is "Good-bye Conflict, Welcome Development". Today we enjoy a vibrant democracy and have constructive international relationships, particularly with our immediate neighbours.

Our national achievements illustrate the fact that peace and development, especially for fragile, conflict-affected countries, can be advanced only when a solid structure has been built, as peace processes do not end once a peace agreement has been signed. High-level political engagement in supporting national efforts to deepen and broaden the processes of inclusion and reconciliation, as well as addressing the underlying causes of conflict, are paramount for a lasting peace, as stated in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see A/70/95). The structure of the national, regional and global institutions, which were established with goodwill, needed to be dynamized to respond to the challenges of political engagement, targeting common interest instead of individual agendas.

International cooperation and multilateral partnership, such as the structure of the United Nations, needed to be adjusted to the current challenges and be utilized in a way that the available resources are rationally maximized to help the Organization to materialize the mission and vision being charged to it.

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate the current President of the General Assembly for his tenacity in taking action to follow up on the recommendation of the two reports on peacebuilding commissioned by the United Nations, namely, the Brahimi report, of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305), and the Ramos Horta report, of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95).

Mr. Pahad (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the convening of this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The importance of this matter in pursuit of the central mandate of the United Nations cannot be overestimated. We appreciate the work of Secretary-General in bringing peacebuilding and sustaining peace to the forefront of the attention of the United Nations, and we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/72/707). South Africa is certain that this high-level meeting will make a meaningful contribution to the debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

On Monday, 23 April, the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform held a very successful high-level round table on security-sector reform and sustaining peace, which was initiated by both co-Chairs of the Group of Friends, South Africa and Slovakia. The President of the General Assembly gave an insightful opening address on the relevance of security-sector reform in the realm of sustaining peace, and I would like to thank him for his participation and strong support on this relevant issue.

Security-sector reform plays a significant role in contributing to sustainable peace and peacebuilding. It is necessary for enabling an environment for the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the rule of law. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine lasting and sustainable peace without addressing security-sector reform especially given that the process is not restricted exclusively to building State institutions but is an inclusive process that has a degree of trust from citizens.

South Africa shares the vision of Secretary-General Guterres of placing emphasis on a culture of prevention, which in our view requires Member States to have sufficient capacity to avoid relapses into conflict and the international community to contribute positively to the stability, economic growth and development of countries emerging from conflict.

Furthermore, the resurgence of conflicts and the growing scale of asymmetrical threats to peace and security have created a challenge to the sustainable modalities available to partners in the sphere of peacebuiding in terms of what works and what does not. Countries that are still locked in conflicts miss an important opportunity to advance in areas of climate change mitigation ecosystem and environmental preservation, reversal of food insecurity and other threats that will be triggered by sustainable development challenges, conflict over scarce resources and grazing land and drought.

We welcome the Secretary-General's objective of forging a common vision and systems and capacities across the United Nations to consistently and effectively support Member States in their attempt to sustain peace and build resilience. Only a United Nations system that draws on all its multifaceted aspects in a synergized and efficient manner is capable of truly delivering on an agenda of sustaining peace. All organs and bodies of the United Nations must, first and foremost, work towards fulfilling the Organization's central mandate of maintaining international peace and security. That, we believe, is the foundation of any socioeconomic development.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, highlights the inclusion of women in peace processes and post-conflict and institution-building processes, which is part of the gender-mainstreaming agenda. That aspect is also premised on the idea of building inclusive societies that draw on the strengths of all their members and leave no one marginalized or without a voice. It is a principle that South Africa has drawn on since it overcame a system of institutionalized exclusion and oppression.

My delegation is also supportive of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for the Peacebuilding Fund and is satisfied with the various options the Secretary-General has presented on financing. Those should be complemented by a feedback mechanism structured more like a checklist of accomplishments and deliverables than an accumulation of expenses. Peacebuilding should be engineered as a supporting mechanism to restore institutional capacity to maintain the rule of law and to curb violence. and the restoration of justice, socioeconomic development, community and national reconciliation and governance structures should be prioritized.

The United Nations must draw on the efforts of regional bodies such as the African Union. The United Nations Strategic Partnership with Africa; the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in 2017; and a subsequent memorandum of understanding signed between the Commission of the African Union and the Peacebuilding Support Office present an opportunity for us to work towards reaching the African Union goal of silencing the guns by 2020 and the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Those are important tools at our disposal to measure our accomplishments and deliverables in the area of peacebuilding.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The discussion on the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace goes to the very core of the purpose of the Organization. We welcome the Secretary-General's leadership in this regard.

The recognition that efforts to sustain peace are necessary not only once conflict has broken out but also long before is essential to our conversation today. Focusing on prevention is vital to building and sustaining peace and to avoiding relapse into violence. Moreover, the mutually reinforcing nature of peace, justice, human rights and development should be at the heart of our discourse in order to fully reflect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ambition contained therein.

The challenges facing societies affected by conflict are complex. Simplistic approaches that prioritize peace over justice or vice versa often fall short.

We support a more comprehensive approach to building and sustaining peace, one that spans the entire conflict cycle and reflects the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda in its entirety. In that regard, sustaining peace and seeking justice should be considered together, as they are interdependent. Goal 16, in particular, supports the need for greater reconciliation. There can be no lasting peace if the targets reflected in SDG 16 are not met. Universal

access to justice and accountable institutions are critical in that respect.

Criminal justice is a central element of this discussion. Ensuring justice works not only to consolidate peace but also to prevent cycles of conflict and to support reconciliation. The International Criminal Court was created precisely to provide criminal accountability where national judiciaries fail to do so.

But the goal of the founders of the Court was not to have as many criminal proceedings before it as possible; quite the opposite. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is based on the philosophy of complementarity and on the primacy of national judiciaries, and therefore it offers a powerful incentive both for States to strengthen their national capacities and for the international community to help them achieve that goal. Joining the Rome Statute can therefore play an essential role in strengthening the rule of law and its institutions, as set out in Goal 16.

For United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace architecture to be effective, the Security Council needs to play its role effectively, including ending and preventing conflicts and atrocity crimes. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes is a strong expression of the determination of the United Nations membership to ensure effective Council action in that regard. We would like to thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for recently joining that initiative, which is now supported by 116 States. At the same time, there is also a growing sense of obligation in the General Assembly if the Security Council fails to prevent or end mass atrocities in a timely and decisive manner.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President for convening this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in accordance with resolution 70/262.

In view of the short time available to us, I will focus solely on four areas of communication, namely, coherence, financing, prevention and the role of women and young people in the process of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

First is strengthening policy and operational coherence. Past experience has already shown that the resurgence of conflicts requires that international actors must strengthen the coherence of their policies and interventions for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My delegation wishes to stress the importance of the regional dimension in all efforts to strengthen coherence in the process of building and sustaining peace. There is no doubt that the most decisive support is generally that which other Member States in the region can provide, often because of their geographical, cultural and historical proximity. Regional actors must be consulted and considered in order to significantly reduce the growing deficit between regional positions and those of actors outside the region. That is in line with the African Union's principle of subsidiarity, which requires that when a subregion is seized of a situation in a country of that subregion, the latter takes precedence over actors outside the region in managing the situation, so as to avoid parallel mechanisms that are likely to undermine the efforts of the subregion.

In the same vein, we must enhance coherence in accordance with the principle of national ownership, which is the very cornerstone of the Peacebuilding Commission. As a process, building sustainable peace is not the responsibility of outside actors. Even in the most disastrous situations, external interventions must be based on what the affected populations know, particularly in the identification of priorities and strategies for sustaining peace.

Secondly, with regard to financing peacebuilding, my delegation recognizes that peacebuilding activities need adequate, predictable and sustainable funding in the face of challenges such as the fragmentation of the system and the lack of resources specifically earmarked for conflict-risk management, including in times of transition. In that regard, my delegation strongly believes that statutory contributions would significantly improve the viability of financing peacebuilding efforts.

Thirdly, with regard to prevention, my delegation believes that the preventive approach should be considered on a case-by-case basis and should avoid the use of clichés, since no two situations are alike. And in both cases, prevention must take place at all levels of the peace trajectory — local, national, regional, continental and global.

As everyone knows, prevention has several advantages. Not only does it save human lives, it also obviates the need for the huge budgets traditionally allocated to peacekeeping operations and humanitarian response plans. Prevention also means developing early-warning mechanisms before conflicts emerge. In our opinion, the development of such mechanisms must also take into account the specifics of each situation. The criteria for sounding the alarm must be clear, well defined and acceptable to all. Premature early warning should be avoided as much as possible as it could lead to unintended results. However, situations on the brink of war should not be neglected. We need a middle road, a case-by-case basis that conciliates the two situations.

We are also convinced that conflict prevention will not be effective without seriously tackling the root causes of conflict. Heading the list is the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It is here that the financing and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and regional agendas becomes crucial. The year 2030 is not far away; it is tomorrow. And on that landmark date, the world will judge us by only one criterion: whether or not we have honoured the commitments made three years ago in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Moreover, on the pillar of prevention, it is worth highlighting the importance of underground diplomacy. More discreet, skilful and nuanced policies, aimed in particular at building trust between groups and political leaders, must be cultivated through dialogue and safe and open channels of communication combining both invisible and visible diplomacy.

Fourth is the role of women and youth in peacebuilding efforts. My delegation firmly believes that peace is not a matter for only the political elite and that it cannot be achieved without the significant contribution of those two sectors of the population, to which Burundi attaches great importance. Establishing programmes and partnerships that give an undisputed place to women and youth is therefore a cornerstone of efforts to lay the basis for lasting peace. Peace cannot be imposed from above or from outside but must be woven into the fabric of society from the ground. An enlightened and inclusive political will to make women and young people into true agents of peace and development as an alternative to violence is essential.

My delegation believes that sustaining peace should not be understood as a single operation. It is a multisectoral, internal and continuous process. Contexts change as a result of both internal fluctuations and external shocks, and that requires the related adjustment of the norms and institutions that govern society. Similarly, the concept of sustaining peace should put more emphasis on assessing and strengthening what already works, not only on what is lacking or needs to be addressed. I conclude with those words.

Mr. Sumah (Sierra Leone): I want to thank the President for organizing this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

At the outset, I would like to align my statement with those made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83) and by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus (see A/72/PV.84).

Sierra Leone supports the President's vision of a new approach to peace. The world has indeed changed significantly over the past two decades. We are no longer only dealing with traditional threats but also face new and emerging non-traditional ones, including terrorism, growing internal violence, transnational organized crime, the negative aspects of technological advancement and climate change. Those new and emerging non-traditional threats are becoming seemingly insurmountable challenges.

The sustaining peace resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), adopted in April 2016 by the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively, have given the United Nations and its Member States a strong foundation to cooperatively surmount such challenges. We welcome the renewed commitment of the United Nations to conflict prevention as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we acknowledge the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). The report provides us with practical analysis and concrete recommendations, including proposals for financing peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities from assessed contributions, as well as voluntary contributions and other innovative financing models. Sierra Leone fully supports the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report.

The joint study by the United Nations and the World Bank *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* notes that conflict can kill any chance for progress in many areas — from development and poverty reduction

to health and education. The study also pointed out that, even with cautious estimates, more investment in conflict prevention could save the international community a huge expenditure, to the amount of $1.5 billion per year. The benefits would be even more significant at the national level, since prevention could save countries over $33 billion in losses. It is therefore important to invest in sustaining peace, as it is crucial to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, and to create the requisite environment for the smooth implementation of the SDGs and ensuring that no one is left behind.

As representatives are aware, Sierra Leone has achieved a milestone in strengthening peace and democracy through another peaceful transition from one sitting Government to another. That was the result of the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections this year. The peaceful transfer of power in a situation where the opposition won the presidential election is a testament to the resilience of our democratic institutions.

That did not happen overnight. It is a clear manifestation of the heavy investment that successive Governments and the international community have made in peacebuilding and sustaining peace by building democratic institutions of good governance. The support of the international community, donor partners and especially the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel has been crucial. The contribution of interreligious organizations, women's and youth groups and civil society to the maintenance of peace before, during and after the elections cannot be overemphasized. They rose to the challenge of timely mediation when there were tensions and appealed for peace and non-violence, using the available media platforms.

That brings me to my next point, which is that partnerships are critical to sustaining peace. In the statement of the President at the regional dialogue on sustaining peace, held in Qatar in January this year, he stated:

> "If we want new and stronger partnerships, we need to start at home — within the United Nations system. In the past, United Nations departments, and the people in them, worked on their agendas. Social development meant only social development. Humanitarian work meant only humanitarian work. So, over the years, strong silos have formed. Now we have to tear them down because development and human rights cannot take hold if war is raging around them. Similarly, peace is more likely to stick if human rights are respected and development is inclusive."

I could not agree more.

In addition, in the pursuit of meaningful partnerships, I am proud to state that Sierra Leone is part of three initiatives that are passionate about realizing peaceful, just and inclusive societies. They are the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies and the SDG 16+ Forum.

The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies is a group of Member States, international organizations, global partnerships and other partners. The group is convened by the Governments of Brazil, Switzerland and Sierra Leone and is supported by the Center on International Cooperation. The Pathfinders have developed the road map for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which is also available in French and Spanish. The road map, which covers all the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies — SDG 16+ — was launched at a side event during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

For the first time, the road map provides a shared vision of how SDG 16+ can be delivered. It is an ambitious but practical document that will act as a docking station to bring many different partners and initiatives together. The road map marks the beginning of a collective journey, with a focus on the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in 2019 under the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The Pathfinders group is open to all Member States, as Governments and other partners make commitments to leading on the implementation of SDG 16+.

The Global Alliance has created partnerships between the United Nations and other actors. These include the private sector, civil society and academia. These institutions are aware of the links between inclusive growth, strong institutions and sustaining peace. What is required is strong partnerships in strengthening these links. That is how we can sustain peace.

Let me conclude by saying that this high-level meeting, which has brought together experiences and lessons learned in sustaining peace from across the world, gives us the opportunity to commit, at the highest level, to making conflict prevention the norm and not the exception.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting and for the concept note.

The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the main purposes of the United Nations, and this two-day meeting allows us to take an in-depth look at central aspects of the issue, thereby helping us to ensure that peace can be sustained in the long term. My country believes that the peacebuilding process must be a fundamental part of the work of the United Nations, linking peace and sustainable development, effectively promoting a culture that seeks a peaceful resolution to conflicts, and safeguarding full respect for human rights.

Peacebuilding is not just a transitional phase but, rather, an ongoing task, since it involves not only the cessation of armed conflict but also the building of public institutions and the development of an awareness on the part of the citizenry that will serve to support it.

Sustaining peace cannot be only the task of a Government within a given territory. Rather, all the State's energies must be involved. Similarly, within the United Nations, peacekeeping is not the work of one office alone; the peace component must be incorporated into all of the actions carried out by the Organization in the framework of the principles set out in the Charter and in the broader work of its three pillars for action.

Over the years, my delegation, as a faithful member of the Peacebuilding Commission, has supported the broadening of the concept of sustaining peace in both its regional dimension and over time. We therefore welcome the efforts made, from a holistic perspective linked to sustainable development, to move prevention back into the heart of discussions at the United Nations, where it belongs.

We wish to highlight the vital role played by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, which is currently assisting my country throughout the evolution of this concept. The role of these bodies should be strengthened and complemented by other parts of the Secretariat and the United Nations system as a whole. By adopting the twin resolutions in 2016 — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — we committed to deepening this transformation, and this high-level meeting is part of the process.

El Salvador, as an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations and as a country committed to incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level and on the ground, as a country committed to human rights, and as a country that 26 years ago experienced an armed conflict and its resolution with the support of the United Nations, knows first-hand what is to be understood by sustaining peace.

A true sustained peace requires the participation of women and young people on the ground and in decision-making, as set out in Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), respectively. My delegation also believes that if this focus is to be applied and be effective, there must also be strategic financing in the context of the work of the United Nations; we therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/72/707 and the discussion of the recommendations contained therein.

It is important to conduct an in-depth review of the work on peace in all its dimensions while also taking account of the fact that the United Nations, including through its country teams, is just one of the outside agents that is tasked, alongside other regional actors, with supporting Governments in building a sustained peace that is directly linked to development needs and strengths, including, of course, SDG 16, which is the cornerstone of and hinge between the two areas. It is beyond question that peace is intimately linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose main aim is the eradication of poverty. We cannot conceive, therefore, of sustainable development without peace or peace without sustainable development.

In conclusion, El Salvador will continue to support the incorporation of the concept of sustaining peace into the various bodies of the United Nations, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, with new inputs to be added as set out in the procedural draft resolution (A/72/L.49) that we will be adopting as a result of this high-level meeting. This must all contribute to the process of analysis on the road to 2020, without neglecting the

practical links that our discussions have in terms of implementation on the ground with the process of repositioning the United Nations development system and the proposed reform of the peace and security pillar, which we hope to receive soon.

Compartmentalizing reality is a problem that has plagued the United Nations throughout its history and that we can no longer countenance at a time when we are considering the concept of sustained peace in its full and just dimensions.

Mr. Hawke (New Zealand): Speakers before me have described this agenda as having the power to be transformative and to be a paradigm shift. New Zealand could not agree more, and we thank the President for having convened this meeting.

The promise of our discussions today is that of a world in which we can significantly reduce the risk of conflict. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace is the shared and mutually reinforcing responsibility of the United Nations system and of Member States.

For the United Nations, we fully support and encourage the work already under way, including the Secretary-General's focus on conflict prevention; his scaling up of the mediation capability of the United Nations; and his gender-parity efforts. We also commend his work to strengthen bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission.

As identified by the Secretary-General, we encourage the United Nations to address the problem of fragmentation. For this to be effective, the Organization needs to undergo cultural changes as well. We as Member States have a collective obligation to put our time and energy into supporting peacebuilding rather than waiting for a crisis to erupt. This should extend to those Member States that have the privilege to serve on the Security Council.

This can involve small things, such as thinking more broadly about whom the Council should be engaging with and how consultations can be more effective, to bigger things such as situational awareness for all Council members and what should be going into Council resolutions.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to cite the wider reforms proposed by the Secretary-General. These reforms directly acknowledge that an integrated approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace is a task that extends well beyond the mandate and responsibility of any one body or institution. New Zealand, along with many others, is strongly supportive of these proposals. All three reform streams are vital for a contemporary United Nations. Taken together, these changes will ensure that the United Nations truly lives the sustaining peace agenda.

The themes I have covered are not new, but our willingness to prioritize the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding efforts will be judged by their results.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation commends the President for having convened this very important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It reminds us that the report of the Secretary-General on the issue (A/72/707) focuses on how he and his team plan to implement the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda, which aims to put prevention at the heart of the United Nations work. The report is also based on the twin resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively, in April 2016. The ideas put forward in the resolutions demonstrate that preventing, ending and transforming violent conflict require a deliberate alignment of development, humanitarian, diplomatic and security interventions.

It is important to note that in order to reduce the likelihood of conflicts and of post-conflict countries relapsing into violence, it is essential to solve holistically the issues of inequality, unemployment, poverty, human rights abuses, climate change, governance, weak law enforcement and illicit national and transnational crime, as well as that of inequitable allocation of resources.

My delegation believes that if we are truly going to have a United Nations system that is better oriented towards prevention, human rights and sustainable development, it will have to trust and invest more in people, including partner Governments, local peacebuilders and its own staff. The United Nations system and its agencies have the capabilities and the commitment. However, they are separated by their silos. The job of the United Nations leadership is to support them in realizing their shared potential and to align their work around what they all agree is most important in ending and in preventing conflicts.

The report entitled "Challenge of sustaining peace" proposed a new funding mechanism for United Nations peacebuilding, by which the Peacebuilding Fund could be provided with core funding of 1 per cent of

the value of the total United Nations budget for peace operations. The twin resolutions only took note of that recommendation, while encouraging Member States to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Fund. In that regard, the United Nations system needs to present a comprehensive analysis of the current funding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in order to achieve a permanent solution.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace have far-reaching implications for peace, security and collective well-being in today's complex and interconnected world. Those two comprehensive and integrative frameworks should guide the work of the United Nations in the years ahead. Sustained, proactive leadership is needed to transform the collective energy behind those agendas into new avenues for achieving their aspirations and ambitious but achievable goals.

The non-inclusion of women and youth in peace processes means that the agreements on ensuing peace do not recognize the needs of the population as a whole. Keeping in mind that some peace agreements fall apart after a few years of existence, the international community needs to explore new ways to create sustainable peace. Including women and youth in formal peace processes would be an important step towards achieving that.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm that the United Republic of Tanzania will continue to take the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda seriously in view of the fact that, along with other countries, it contributes troops to several United Nations peacekeeping missions. Striving for peace should be a collective endeavour that involves Governments, international organizations, regional blocs, non-State actors, religious groups, civil societies and individuals.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country is committed to the fundamental principles of international relations, in particular building and maintaining peace. In that regard, my country underscores that the basic foundation for building and maintaining peace is established by achieving justice. Without justice there can be no peace, even in the absence of violence for periods of time.

The first example of peace that fails to be achieved owing to lack of justice is the Palestinian question. The Palestinian people have suffered under the yoke of occupation for decades without a glimmer of hope that one day they would be able to obtain their legitimate rights to establish their own independent State along the borders of 4 June 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital.

My country has sought to settle conflicts peacefully. To that end, it has put forward a number of initiatives. Regarding the Palestinian question, my country put forward the Arab Peace Initiative, which was adopted by the Arab States at their summit held in Beirut in 2002.

On the issue of Yemen, my country has led the peacekeeping operation as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, which allowed for a peaceful transfer of power before the Houthi rebels took control, supported by Iran.

In Syria, my country sought to unite the opposition and to prepare the ground for serious negotiations with the Syrian Government in order to implement the first Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

In Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Iraq and elsewhere, my country has been a key supporter of peace and reconciliation between brotherly peoples. We have sought to bring together the positions of various parties. We have worked to promote a culture of dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance at both the national and the international levels. To that end, my country has established a number of national and international centres, such as the King Abdulaziz Centre for National Dialogue, the Global Centre for Combating Extremist Ideology, the King Abdullah Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, and others.

We reaffirm that the United Nations must play a more effective role in peacebuilding and in establishing peace foundations, by strengthening sustainable development, particularly in developing countries, and by working closely with regional and subregional organizations to strengthen their capacities to bring about peace and prevent conflicts. That can be achieved by creating specialized forums to address specific issues before they deteriorate further. They must also seek to strengthen mediation and reconciliation while working proactively to maintain respect for the national sovereignty of Member States.

We hope that at this high-level meeting, the General Assembly will adopt a programme of work that includes all such elements and focuses on establishing

justice and development, since those are the two key foundations of international peace and security.

Mr. Inguanez (Malta): Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83). We would like to add a few elements in our national capacity.

Despite the fact that most countries enjoy peace and prosperity, we cannot ignore the sobering reality that a number of regions are still plagued by conflict. We remain deeply worried about the ongoing violence in our immediate neighbourhood and beyond, and we are gravely concerned about the implications those events can have for regional and international peace and security. The devastating effects that those conflicts have on the civilian population cannot be ignored. On the contrary, they are a stark reminder of our collective responsibility as members of the international community to promote and to sustain international peace.

Malta has always sought to contribute to efforts aimed at strengthening the current peace architecture and to foster actions conducive to the maintenance of peace. In that regard, we greatly appreciate the work done by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly and will continue to fully support their efforts.

Malta strongly believes in the importance of dealing with root causes in order to build resilient societies and to prevent violent conflict. It is crucial that we identify challenges before they turn into greater problems and work towards mitigating their negative effects before they spiral out of control. Governments should work towards increasing and creating new employment opportunities, providing the right conditions for their citizens to succeed and to achieve their ambitions and aspirations. In that context, the role of civil society, women and youth is of fundamental importance. Particular emphasis also needs to be placed on the rule of law, accountability, access to justice and human rights.

For more than 70 years, the United Nations has contributed greatly to the maintenance of international peace and security. As the nature of conflict continues to evolve and becomes more complex and multifaceted, the United Nations also needs to evolve and to adapt in order to remain effective and responsive. We strongly believe that with the input and commitment of all Member States, the reform process will bring about the necessary changes to make sure that the United Nations retains its role as the most important player in the international arena.

Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83) and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Today, numerous armed conflicts and instability in the world make us return to the main purposes of the United Nations: to maintain peace and security throughout the world. However, peaceful and sustainable coexistence among countries and societies requires collective efforts and determination, as well as national commitment to a sustainable future that belongs to us all.

Peace is not only the absence of violence. There are institutions, structures, communities and attitudes that underpin it. Understanding what makes peace possible enables us to sustain it.

In the twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace of 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), we asserted that sustaining peace should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations and that it must involve the entire United Nations system. In that context, we particularly welcome and fully support the Secretary-General's steps and vision regarding the three United Nations reform tracks. Those reforms are necessary to make the United Nations truly focused and capable of sustaining peace. At the same time, we welcome the recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and the recommendations and options that it contains. We must work together to advance those recommendations and continue to implement them.

Let me now touch on two elements that are of particular importance to my delegation: inclusivity and adequate resourcing for sustaining peace activities.

Inclusive, transparent and effective decision-making and respect for the rule of law are critical to sustaining peace. When peacebuilding efforts are based on inclusive societal consultations, where credible mechanisms for effective and broad public participation exist and no group or segment of the society is excluded, that generates legitimacy and trust in the State and its institutions. Conversely, the absence of such inclusivity threatens peace and reconciliation processes and the stability of the State itself.

In particular, women, youth and civil society can and must play an active role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and the peacebuilding efforts that follow. We have an increasing amount of evidence that the participation of women means greater peace and stability. However, at the same time and despite that knowledge, investment in women, peace and security, as well as in women and sustaining peace, remains woefully low.

It is our view that sustaining peace has major linkages with the women and peace and security agenda. Both agendas have a key commitment to the principle of prevention. Yet we also have to recognize that prevention is the least developed and most underresourced aspect of both the women and peace and security agenda and the sustaining peace agenda. There is a clear need to address that key gap for a long-lasting peace. For that, we need to discuss ways to ensure better financing for United Nations prevention activities, whether as part of the women and peace and security agenda or that of sustaining peace.

That brings me to my second point, which is that the effectiveness of the United Nations system in sustaining peace is contingent on appropriate resourcing. Examples from the field indicate that well-designed and well-managed pooled funds can improve the efficiency of the work of the United Nations in sustaining peace. The United Nations system needs smarter money, not necessarily more money. Innovative ways of financing and partnerships with the private sector should be at the forefront of our discussion on how to improve funding for United Nations activities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In that context, we look forward to the interim report of the Secretary-General further elaborating on his recommendations and options, including those on financing for United Nations peacebuilding activities. We remain hopeful that the report will steer the needed discussion and will lead to some important decisions.

Let me conclude by saying that it is in our common interest to further reinforce the sustaining peace efforts by utilizing the momentum of the United Nations reform, committing to the adequate resourcing and capacity-building of the United Nations system and encouraging Member States to fully engage and work towards a sustainable peace. Lithuania remains ready to do its part.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): The United Nations is undergoing a paradigm shift in how it addresses conflict. That is very necessary, as traditional approaches have too often failed us. We now understand that efforts to sustain peace are indispensable not only once a conflict has broken out but also long before, through the prevention of conflict and by addressing its root causes.

Against that background, Austria welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General and his efforts towards sustaining peace, which are fully reflected in his recent report (A/72/707), and his proposals for the reform of the Organization. It is now for us, the Member States, to lend him our support for his ambitious efforts. The adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.49 will be testimony to that support. In that regard, let me underline three key points.

First, the deepened engagement of the United Nations for conflict prevention is in fact an offer to Member States to avail themselves of international support not only before potential outbreaks of conflict but also in phases of transition after conflict. In that respect, we salute the proposals of the Secretary-General to form a new generation of United Nations country teams, centred around a strategic United Nations Development Assistance Framework led by empowered Resident Coordinators.

Secondly, as the Secretary-General himself recently noted:

> "An emphasis on human rights lies at the heart of conflict prevention, which must be our highest priority."

We cannot make any progress without helping countries to build their capacity to protect their own population. We also cannot look the other way anymore in the case of mass atrocities. The United Nations and its leadership must speak truth to power.

Thirdly, women must be at the core of our efforts towards sustaining peace. We welcome the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity to address the lack of parity at all levels. We must also not tire in our efforts to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda as a core element in achieving sustained peace.

Through the collaborative approach of our development agency, line ministries and other partners, Austria currently supports a number of peacebuilding initiatives. Allow me to highlight three

pertinent initiatives with regional governmental and non-governmental organizations.

First, Austria is currently supporting strengthening the Conflict Prevention Framework of the Economic Community of West African States in a multi-year collaboration with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding. With that project, we aim to contribute to an integrated and decentralized early-warning and response system at the community, national and regional levels in western Africa.

Secondly, the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution cooperates with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre to train 50 West African humanitarian assistance professionals in a two-year project to increase their response capacity.

Thirdly, Austria is working with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to support its Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism in the Horn of Africa. That project will support IGAD's collaboration with national Governments in the subregion to counter transnational security threats and enhance the skills of IGAD and national Governments in the areas of preventive diplomacy and mediation. It also provides for capacity-building and core staffing for IGAD's Peace and Security Division.

Let me conclude by thanking the President for organizing this high-level meeting. We sincerely hope that it contributes to concrete change on the ground, as that is why we are here. People everywhere have high expectations of the United Nations. It is our shared responsibility not to disappoint them.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for having convened this very important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and for his strong commitment and dedication to the issue. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his comprehensive report on the topic (A/72/707). I join previous speakers in congratulating the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania for their successful steering of the consultations on draft resolution A/72/L.49, which will be adopted later today as an important outcome of the high-level meeting.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier in the meeting by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83). We would like to make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

The unlawful use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of States, the increased brutality of armed conflicts, growing terrorist and separatist threats and the highest-ever level of forced displacement, intolerance and discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds continue to represent the most serious challenges to peace, security and sustainable development.

In their twin resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively, the General Assembly and the Security Council particularly stressed the need for joint work by Member States to sustain peace at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions.

Azerbaijan fully supports the Secretary-General's determination to genuinely contribute to preventing wars and sustaining peace, as well as his efforts to conduct the reform process with a view to responding early and effectively to conflicts and crises and assisting Member States in their efforts to sustain peace and build resilient and prosperous societies.

First and foremost, all States must strictly comply with their international obligations, particularly those relating to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their internationally recognized borders. Those fundamental principles are constituents of the common, rule-based international order. They are universally binding and apply to all situations and conflicts, whatever their distinct root causes and nature.

Peace and good-neighbourly relations, based on full respect for the aforementioned principles, are necessary fundamental prerequisites for economic cooperation. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Heads of State and Government stated in particular that there could be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

The concept of conflict prevention, in its inter-State dimension, is inextricably linked to the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United

Nations. The primary objective of that principle is to commit States to refraining in their international relations from the threat or use of force, except in cases of self-defence and activities authorized by the Security Council, and resolving their disputes peacefully and in conformity with international law.

It is important to underline that the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes — or, to a certain extent, the concept of prevention as its non-legal equivalent — cannot be misused for covering up aggression or interpreted as implying the continuation and maintenance of situations created through violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

For the purpose of preventing the escalation of conflicts, more energy and political will should be invested in the implementation of resolutions adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations. It is unacceptable and intolerable that armed aggression against sovereign States and the resulting military occupation of their territories continue despite Security Council resolutions. We concur with the Secretary-General that political will to sustain peace remains invaluable.

The international human rights framework also provides a critical foundation for sustaining peace, in particular in the context of addressing the effects of conflict on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of those suffering, especially forcibly displaced persons, including through the use of the existing mechanisms, such as special procedures, treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review.

Azerbaijan's consistent position with regard to the topic under consideration stems from its practical experience of facing continued armed aggression, foreign military occupation and ethnic cleansing and from its keen interest in contributing to the achievement of lasting peace and sustainable development in our region and worldwide.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Sustaining peace is a policy agenda with the potential to have a transformative impact on the United Nations effectiveness. Properly implemented, it will make the United Nations more fit for purpose in the modern world and enhance implementation of the United Nations founding principles in this day and age.

Sustaining peace is a core, organizing principle for the whole United Nations across its three pillars. It provides a home for the vision of United Nations reform that will only become more essential as individual United Nations reform tracks go forward.

Australia was proud to co-facilitate negotiations on the landmark sustaining peace resolutions adopted in 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)). We welcome this high-level meeting, as well as the recent Secretary-General's report on the issue (A/72/707), both of which were requested in those original resolutions. We also welcome the imminent adoption of the new draft resolution (A/72/L.49). All of those developments give us what we need to continue successfully implementing this agenda.

We are encouraged by the energy and commitment of Member States, the United Nations leadership and the United Nations system to taking action to date. Continued implementation is essential. For Member States, the resolutions emphasize the primary responsibility of national Governments and authorities for sustaining peace. Continued efforts by Member States to advance inclusive peacebuilding processes are vital.

When it comes to the United Nations system, let there be no confusion. Sustaining peace requires action from the entire United Nations system, not just the traditional peacebuilding areas. Member States have expressed their clear expectation that the whole United Nations system will advance this agenda energetically and without delay. Further consideration by Member States of a few outstanding issues must not delay progress in other areas.

We must prioritize organizational change. It will be crucial to embed coherent working methods throughout the United Nations system, to deepen and broaden partnerships outside the United Nations system, to ensure that reforms make a practical difference in the field and to get better at identifying and delivering effective action on prevention. Ensuring that the key role of women is recognized and used to advance sustaining peace will be vital. Financing, including from the private sector and innovative sources, will be key.

With the new sustaining peace resolution we will have a further window to continue implementing this agenda. We need to use that time well, moving further

beyond the slogans and building a United Nations that is as effective as possible at sustaining peace in practice.

Mr. Kornelíou (Cyprus): At the outset, let me congratulate the President for organizing this important and timely high-level event. We hope that this meeting will prove to be instrumental in garnering support for the new United Nations approach on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83) and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

The sustaining peace agenda should be part of a wider response to the urgent need to strengthen the coherence of the United Nations system, addressing the root causes of conflicts and new threats and challenges to international peace and security, such as terrorism and extremism. Cyprus supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and the renewed focus on the need for a United Nations system that can better serve its Member States in their efforts to prevent armed conflicts and sustain peace.

The concept of sustaining peace represents a shift in current practice, as it espouses a system-wide approach that incorporates peacebuilding and peacekeeping alongside sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian activities. Sustaining peace is essentially the responsibility of Member States, and the process must be owned and led by the Governments and the peoples of conflict-affected countries with the support of the international community. The United Nations system should support Member States within the framework defined by the Charter of the United Nations, and must be given the operational, financial and political resources to deliver that support effectively.

From a national perspective, the Cyprus question is certainly pertinent in that context. The Cyprus question remains an issue of international peace and security of the United Nations, owing to the enduring foreign occupation and forceful de facto division of my country, in gross violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. In that regard, as a country that has been sheltered by and has relied on United Nations peacekeeping, we are grateful for and highly value the role of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). As long as the situation on the ground remains unchanged and until a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus question is reached, UNFICYP's continued presence in its current mandate remains indispensable.

Let me reiterate that we remain firmly committed to the solution of the Cyprus problem, as enshrined in relevant resolutions, as the only way forward. The United Nations remains the only forum through which a comprehensive settlement can be achieved and should therefore be at the forefront of efforts to reunite Cyprus. A just and lasting settlement would benefit the people of Cyprus and contribute decisively to the wider efforts to maintain a much-needed environment of peace, stability and prosperity in our region. At the same time, it is crucial that all actors embrace the importance of sustaining peace through dialogue and respect for international law.

We hope that this event will contribute to forging a strong consensus on a renewed and reformed peace and security architecture by 2020 and that the United Nations will be better equipped to help fragile and war-torn nations build a more durable and just peace. Cyprus stands ready to render its full support.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First of all, let me thank the President for organizing this important debate.

Looking at the current, worrying international developments, it is clear that sustaining peace needs to remain an important priority of the United Nations and its Member States. In fact, the Organization was founded to sustain peace more than 70 years ago. The whole Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations is a clear definition of sustaining and building peace. Peace is built before, during and long after conflict, and that is what the Charter is about.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore has put sustaining peace at the basis of its foreign policy. It is also the basic theme during its membership of the Security Council this year, in which the prevention of conflicts, peacekeeping efforts during conflict and accountability after conflict are our key priorities. All of them are connected to sustaining peace. I will highlight three points in my introduction: first, the importance of national ownership and prevention; secondly, the importance of inclusion and, thirdly, the need to strengthen partnerships, also in peacekeeping.

My first point concerns national ownership and prevention. We, the Member States, have the primary responsibility to build sustainable peace at the national

level. Taking national ownership to prevent conflict and to sustain peace needs to build on the blueprint provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To implement the Sustainable Development Goals is to address the root causes of conflict. It is about socioeconomic development and access to justice. It is about addressing the effects of climate change — one of the biggest threats to humankind of our time. It is about all the goals that make our societies peaceful, just and inclusive. It is about addressing the root causes of conflict as the best way to prevent conflict.

Secondly, we must strengthen inclusive approaches. As a recent joint United Nations-World Bank study, entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, shows us, political, social and economic exclusion and the lack of inclusive and accountable justice and security institutions are key factors in igniting and perpetuating conflict.

Fundamental human rights, the rule of law and human dignity are the foundation for freedom, justice and peace. That includes the freedom of religion or belief, be it for Christian minorities in the Middle East, Muslim minorities in Asia and Africa or any other religious minorities anywhere in the world. We need to address the needs and grievances of marginalized groups and ensure an active participation of all of society's components, including women, youth and those whose sexual orientation or gender identity does not conform to societal or cultural norms. That is the most effective way to make sure that no one is left behind.

My third point is that we need to break down the silos and strengthen partnerships. As the Secretary-General just mentioned in the Security Council, we need to improve peacekeeping operations, which are active during conflicts. For that, we need an enhanced partnership for peacekeeping between the United Nations and all its Member States. The report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707) mentions successful examples like the Global Focal Point programme. It demonstrates how the United Nations can achieve coherence and overcome fragmentation. We should seek to apply those examples in various contexts. Cross-pillar models of United Nations joint assessments, planning, programming and fundraising need to be institutionalized and should become standard practice.

A strengthened Peacebuilding Commission and a well-resourced Peacebuilding Fund are crucial tools. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is proud to be a top donor to the Peacebuilding Fund, and we should make sure that the wider United Nations development system, especially the United Nations Development Programme, is better connected to peacekeeping efforts.

That is just the beginning. The United Nations cannot do that alone. It needs to strengthen its partnerships with other multilateral, regional and local organizations, including civil society and the private sector. In particular, the partnership with the World Bank needs to be further operationalized to create synergy in the field.

We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to further discuss the options and recommendations for sustaining peace. We will continue our efforts in the Security Council, building on our partnership with Italy, with which we share a seat in the Council in 2017 and 2018. We will continue in that joint seat to promote the issue of building and sustaining peace in the Security Council. Real political will and the mobilization of resources will be critical to operationalize a more integrated agenda. Only by working more closely together can we strengthen prevention and improve peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding. Only working together can we build and sustain peace. That is our common challenge.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): In the past 72 years, United Nations peacekeeping has been instrumental in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. In that regard, we have been only active, rather than proactive, in that call, especially in the area of sustaining peace.

Today the need for a global commitment to multilateral solutions to conflicts and to collaborative security is more urgent than ever before, especially in the area of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Mali, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to mention but a few, are the very reasons why, more than ever, the issue of sustaining peace must be addressed by the Organization and its membership.

Conflict prevention and sustaining peace are, first and foremost, the responsibility of every Member State, a position that Botswana has consistently espoused. When Member States fail to protect their own people, then it is the collective responsibility of this body, as per the purposes and principles of the Charter of the

United Nations, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and prevent the outbreak, continuation or recurrence of conflict. Prevention and sustaining peace are in everyone's interest. They should not be seen as a threat to sovereignty.

However, a balance should be forged and trust obtained among the Member States regarding how to bring about and sustain peace. The effectiveness of measures such as early warning and early action depends on trust among Member States. Sustaining peace is first and foremost,a process that requires the political will of the entire membership. It needs to be adequately resourced and inclusive.

The signs are always there. Conflict stems from exclusion, discrimination, marginalization, human rights violations, political, economic and social inequalities and the political choice to resort to violence rather than dialogue. Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability before they get out of control. It calls for inclusive, nationally led processes that build strong institutions and that are supported by citizens, including women and youth.

The sustaining peace agenda, together with the Sustainable Development Goals, provides the platform and the master plan for any Member State to draft its own national plan. That is the very path that my delegation took in drafting our National Vision 2036 and the National Development Plan 11, both of which are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda.

As Member States, we need to invest in inclusivity so as to make people reap the benefits of diversity rather than seeing diversity as a threat. Everyone in society must have a strong feeling of belonging to a community in order for peace to prevail.

Civil society also has an important role to play in raising the alarm when that respect is threatened or lost or with the rise of autocratic regimes cracking down on fundamental freedoms and political oppositions. The inclusion and involvement of women and youth in peacemaking processes is of great importance. Those segments of our societies play an important role in both preventive diplomacy and in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

There is also the issue of partnerships and cooperation with regional entities, which is another important factor to be considered. We need strong partnerships. A combination of United Nations efforts with those of regional and subregional organizations is crucial for success. The United Nations cannot achieve sustainable peace alone. National and subregional stakeholders need to be equally involved, with the oversight, expertise and support of the United Nations, other regional organizations and civil-society organizations.

Let us break down the silos and divisions, as delegations before me indicated. We need to do that in order to strengthen our collaboration. We will need to work towards a future in which sustaining peace is not the task of the United Nations alone, but a joint effort of all of us and the core objective of all regional entities. The upcoming negotiations on the United Nations peace and security pillar in the Fifth Committee provide an opportunity for us to reaffirm those calls and finance the initiatives of sustaining peace. Investing in prevention is not only morally right; it is the smart, economically sound and sensible thing to do.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's support for the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.49. We will continue to play our part as a country by constructively contributing to the Secretary-General's reform on the peace and security pillar, and we stand ready to share lessons, experiences and best practices with the United Nations membership from an African perspective.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I would like to thank the President for convening this important high-level meeting to assess the efforts we have undertaken so far and explore the opportunities to further strengthen the United Nations work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We would like to thank him also for the valuable work in the process leading up to the high-level meeting today, guided by the road map for sustaining peace, including by conducting interactive dialogues with all relevant stakeholders and other useful outreach activities.

While fully aligning ourselves with the statement of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83), I would like to offer some additional reflections.

The so called twin resolutions adopted simultaneously by the General Assembly and the Security Council on 27 April 2016 (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively) represent the most comprehensive United Nations resolutions on peacebuilding. They established the concept of

sustaining peace and broadened our understanding of peacebuilding as simultaneously a goal and a process that covers the entire peace continuum, including all stages of the conflict cycle. They acknowledged the primacy of politics, the primary responsibility of respective national Governments for peace and security and the significance of people-centred and inclusive processes through the centrality of conflict prevention.

Slovakia attaches great importance to developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to peace and to the need to prioritize conflict prevention and embrace the concept of sustaining peace across all three pillars of the work of the United Nations.

In that respect, my delegation welcomes and supports the vision of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace as expressed in his report (A/72/707) issued in January. In that report, the Secretary-General laid out many recommendations, which deserve our close consideration and concerted action. We would like to support in particular the efforts to increase coherence across the United Nations system, enhance the capacities of the United Nations resident coordinators and revitalize the Peacebuilding Support Office. Greater predictability and sustainability of financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace must also be addressed, and we note with appreciation that the Secretary-General's report makes a number of innovative proposals in that regard.

It should also be noted that peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of political, development, humanitarian and human rights dimensions and tools. Therefore, innovating and strengthening the capabilities of the United Nations in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace must be closely linked to the ongoing efforts proposed by the Secretary-General on recalibrating the United Nations development system, reforming management and restructuring the peace and security pillar.

Too often, public grievances and violence are driven by the politics of exclusion, which may result from an unrepresentative or abusive security sector or from its failure to protect citizens from security threats and human rights violations.

To enhance knowledge and understanding of the role of security sector reform in sustaining peace and to feed into the broader discussions taking place today and yesterday, the Permanent Missions of Slovakia and South Africa, as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, co-hosted on Monday the high-level round table on security-sector reform and sustaining peace. We are happy to say that it was a very successful event, which we hope has contributed and will contribute further to our deliberations on the issue of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Over the course of that event, we discussed in particular national ownership and leadership of security-sector reform and the importance of national policy and governance frameworks, as well as the inclusion of women and the representation of diverse sectors of society in such reform processes from the outset. We have also examined the role of partnerships and financing in the context of security-sector reform effortsand called for United Nations coordination of those complex and sensitive processes. A co-Chairs' statement of the round table with the key observations and recommendations has just been circulated today to all member States.

In conclusion, I wish to add that the benefits of investing in sustaining peace and sustainable development are clear and convincing. We spend too much money on responding to crises and conflicts and too little on preventing them in the first place. Orienting the United Nations system around those goals and changing the imbalance between conflict prevention and conflict response will be a daunting, nevertheless rewarding, challenge. Indeed, it is the only way forward to promote just, inclusive and peaceful societies, and therefore it represents our shared responsibility.

Finally, I would like to express our full support for the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.49, on the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, at the end of the plenary session of this high-level meeting. The draft resolution establishes a mechanism to maintain the momentum on this important subject by enabling the Secretary-General to continue with the implementation of the peacebuilding agenda and encouraging the General Assembly to keep following the work in this area beyond this high-level meeting. Sustaining peace and prevention require from all of us sustained commitment, effort and courage — a true culture of peace materialized in tangible, bold action delivered to the people of our planet on the ground.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): First of all, let me join other delegations in commending His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák for convening this high-level meeting. In our

view, this event, together with the Secretary-General's composite emphasis, confirms the unity of purpose of our Organization when it comes to peace and security and development.

I align my statement with that made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

The adoption in 2016 of the General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) led to a new paradigm shift on the issues of peace and development. The concept of sustaining peace links the peace continuum to development and human rights. Needless to say, they mutually reinforce each other to the extent that neither can be achieved without the other.

Our national experience also confirms that conflict prevention and sustaining peace will succeed only when the root causes of conflicts are addressed through an inclusive approach. While national Governments and authorities have the primary responsibility for sustaining peace, the international community, including the United Nations and development partners, has the complementary and shared responsibility of supporting the efforts of national Governments.

It is equally important to engage all stakeholders in charting a new pathway for development and sustaining peace. It fits well into the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to leave no one behind. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office and develop it as a hinge between the peace and security pillar and other pillars, as well as with the humanitarian community. We believe that its ability to deliver should not be compromised in any manner.

We take note of the proposed reform of the United Nations development system, with a revitalized United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which incorporates conflict-sensitivity analysis. We believe that national Governments should be fully informed of and consulted in the analysis of conflict risks so that the United Nations country teams' efforts to prevent conflict do not unwittingly spur conflict because of inadequate risk analysis resulting from a lack of proper understanding of the local context and culture.

Nepal, emerging as it is from armed conflict, mega-earthquakes and other major crises, is determined to implement its human rights-based Constitution, adopted in 2015, which is the culmination of the country's uniquely successful peace process. In that connection, the successful local, provincial and federal elections in 2017 were a landmark accomplishment, with more than 41 per cent of seats in the elected bodies at all levels being filled by women.

Nepal has entered a new era of political stability, with a focus on sustainable socioeconomic transformation. The Government is determined to make the most of this historic opportunity, but the continued understanding, support and cooperation of the international community is needed more than ever.

Nepal has been a consistent and reliable partner in United Nations peacekeeping operations, even at the height of its own internal conflict. With its own experience of a post-conflict peace process in its multicultural, multireligious, multi-ethnic and multilingual context, Nepal believes in the power of synergies between peace and development at both the global and national levels.

We should not make the mistake of seeing peacebuilding and sustainable development through different lenses. There must be strong and sustained political will to reinforce sustaining peace initiatives through sincere and sustainable development initiatives.

Mr. Sisilo (Solomon Islands): Solomon Islands also has something to share on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, thanks to our own experience of the atrocities of armed conflict following a lapse in security in the late 1990s. It was the result of a complex set of interrelated issues that included a fast-growing population, slow economic growth and weak State institutions, to name some. But thanks to the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), we were able to restore peace. RAMSI, a regional intervention, will be remembered as a positive example of friends coming together in support of a neighbour experiencing a crisis of immense proportions.

While RAMSI has been very successful, the process of post-conflict rebuilding must continue. Like other countries in post-conflict situations, Solomon Islands will continue to face many challenges, all the more so now that we are on the verge of graduating out of the least developed countries category. But thankfully, over the past year the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has widened its coverage with a new building plan that includes my country. We are therefore very grateful for the support of the PBC and look forward

to working closely with all key stakeholders to show unity of effort across the United Nations system. This approach must be based on sound political and conflict analysis that recognizes the uniqueness of each national and regional context in which United Nations system entities are present.

Based on our experience, the contribution of young people to sustaining peace must also be recognized and supported with targeted funding. Young people are very much the present and the future, and their potential for building and sustaining peace must be harnessed. We must also commit to increasing financing for gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment in conflict-affected situations. Adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding initiatives is therefore critical. One way of securing such financing is to set aside some of our assessed contributions for peacebuilding, which would send a powerful signal of Member States' commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as core United Nations activity.

Climate change is another issue that could potentially trigger conflicts. Solomon Islands, like other Pacific island countries, is at the forefront of the impacts of climate change. Indeed, an unstable climate and the subsequent displacement and relocation of peoples can exacerbate some of the core drivers of conflict, such as migratory pressures, clash of cultures and competition for limited resources. Those are threats to the very existence of humankind and could very well morph into threats to global peace and security.

Our current reform efforts must therefore take that growing threat very seriously, which is why the Pacific small island developing States have been requesting the Security Council to also address the issue of climate change. It is also why I will again reiterate our call for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security.

Mr. Castro Córdoba (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this important high-level meeting to promote the efforts and opportunities that the United Nations can utilize to strengthen its work in peacebuilding and in achieving sustained peace.

My country associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Panama on behalf of the Human Security Network (see A/72/PV.85). In addition, we would like to make some remarks in our national capacity.

I would like to focus on three areas that my country considers essential: human rights, sustainable development and education.

It is undeniable that human rights are central to achieving and preserving peace. Promoting and defending them in their most comprehensive sense is the best prevention tool we have. The observance of human rights is directly related to respect for the rule of law, democracy and peaceful coexistence. The global governance of human rights that we have built contributes to the effectiveness and sustainability of United Nations peace efforts. That is why it is essential to support and strengthen it.

At the same time, it is important to reiterate that there can be no sustainable development without peace or peace without sustainable development, and that we must improve and support the activities undertaken by the entities of the United Nations development system, as they not only support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also contribute to the consolidation and sustainability of peace. We must focus on comprehensive strategies in which we ensure freedom, security and respect for all human rights, as well as the empowerment of women, and a global commitment to building just and democratic societies that contribute not only to the achievement of peace but also to safeguarding it.

The third fundamental area is education, as it is a vital prevention tool for laying the foundations for a lasting solution. The experience of my country following the abolition of the army in 1948 was the freeing up of resources from military expenditures, allowing the country to devote them to investment in social development and to the fulfilment of the rights to education and health. Therefore, ensuring early and inclusive education for children that emphasizes the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and the acceptance of differences is key to creating a society that considers peaceful interactions as the necessary way to resolve disputes.

In conclusion, the process of achieving sustained peace must be inclusive with a primary focus on prevention and must flow equitably across the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. The level and number of participants in the event that we are witnessing today

is an indication of the importance of the topic for our delegations. We must build partnerships and work towards a culture of prevention that has world peace and security at its core. We must make multilateralism our collective tool to combat challenges and achieve sustainable peace.

Mrs. Moldoisaeva (Kyrgyzstan): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for the initiative he has taken in organizing this high-level meeting, which provides an excellent opportunity to discuss the crucially important theme of peacebuilding, including United Nations capacity in this area. It also presents us with an excellent opportunity to discuss ways to support and assist in the maintenance of peace with the participation of civil society, including women's groups and youth representatives, the private sector, regional and subregional organizations and academia.

We regret to have to state — and in this we agree with the Secretary-General — that the world is not currently a peaceful place. In this regard, we must learn how best to work to prevent conflicts, what tools we have at our disposal, how much we can use these tools and what we can do to improve the situation.

In the twin resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — Member States recognized that sustaining peace in the broad sense is the goal and that the process of building a shared vision of society should be based on the needs of all population groups. These resolutions note that Member States need to increase the effectiveness of their collective efforts aimed at preserving peace at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions. The resolutions also stress that preserving peace is essential to preventing the emergence, escalation, continuation or recurrence of conflicts.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, dated 19 January 2018 (A/72/707), and we note with satisfaction that the recommendations and views contained therein are clearly aimed at implementing practical solutions to existing issues related to the functioning of the peacebuilding architecture and are the basis for further discussions by Member States.

We agree that the task of sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility of Governments and all other national stakeholders, including through the setting of priorities, the implementation of strategies and the management of activities to preserve peace in the implementation of the principle of inclusiveness. We recognize the need to overcome the disunity of the United Nations system and increase its capacity, which will strengthen its ability to support Member States in their efforts to establish and preserve peace and to respond promptly and effectively to conflicts and crises, including by strengthening strategic and operational partnerships among the United Nations, national Governments and other key stakeholders, including international, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, youth organizations and the private sector, taking into account national priorities and policies.

We support the increased participation of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace and the involvement of young people. It is also necessary to resolve one of the main issues of concern, namely, the issue of financing the United Nations in the field of peacebuilding. We hope that Member States will consider this issue in detail, taking into account existing and prospective financial resources, based on increased transparency, accountability and efficiency.

In conclusion, I express my hope for the successful outcome of this high-level meeting in order to send a powerful signal that the United Nations will be able to successfully develop and adapt flexibly to the changing environment, becoming more modern and effective in addressing the challenges before us that are threatening peace and stability.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

The high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace offers a unique opportunity to further develop the sustaining peace agenda and to strengthen the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Italy expresses its deep gratitude to President Lajčák for his commitment and leadership in carrying out this initiative.

Giving substance to the sustaining peace agenda means looking at the future of the United Nations in a thoughtful way. Italy welcomes the recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and commends his remarkable efforts on this crucial issue. Italy reaffirms its strong

commitment to supporting the Secretary-General in putting his recommendations into practice, linking prevention, mediation and the promotion of and respect for human rights and development in a coherent and comprehensive vision for peace, security, and economic and social growth.

For this reason, Italy has decided to participate once again in the Peacebuilding Commission and increase its contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund and to the conflict-prevention activities of the Department of Political Affairs. Italy stresses the need for predictable and sustainable financing of the sustaining peace agenda and is committed to identifying ways to urgently fulfil such need.

The consensual draft resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly (A/72/L.49) will give Member States the opportunity to enhance their engagement in this process, in view of the review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020.

The sustaining peace agenda stresses the need for a holistic approach covering the pillars of security, human rights and development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also places great emphasis on the strong link between peace and development. What is now needed more than ever is a common effort to move from vision to action. The challenges we are facing in regions such as the Mediterranean, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa require comprehensive and prompt action by all of us. The full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, the gender equality initiative and the youth, peace and security agenda are first steps in the right direction.

The capacity of the United Nations is unparalleled and must be fully exploited by improving synergy, cooperation and coordination among all United Nations actors at Headquarters and on the ground. In this sense, Italy would also like to reiterate its full support for the United Nations reform proposals presented by the Secretary-General, the implementation of which we consider to be intimately connected to the realization of the sustaining peace agenda.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we welcome the important role that the Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office are also called to play in sustaining peace, in view of the new architecture of the peace and security pillar. At the same time, we recognize the need for strengthened partnerships among the United Nations, international, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil-society organizations, women's groups, youth organizations and the private sector. The scale and nature of the challenge of sustaining peace call for a collective effort that Italy is also undertaking in a spirit of full cooperation and European cohesion through its split term with the Netherlands in the Security Council in 2017-2018.

Mr. Ry Tuy (Cambodia): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for putting together this timely meeting on such an important topic. I would also like to express my country's appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his insightful report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

The Sustainable Development Goals — and in particular their full implementation — should serve as fundamental building blocks in the attainment of sustainable peace worldwide. Just as there can be no peace without development, there can be no development without peace. Indeed, sustainable peace and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing in nature, and it is a strongly held belief of the Cambodian Government that education is central to building long-lasting peace for all.

Investing in education contributes to sustainable peace globally. It contributes to a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, increased employment levels and reductions in levels of poverty and inequality, while undercutting radicalization levels and extremist views. Investing in education is as essential to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals as it is to sustaining peace worldwide.

Sustaining global peace requires a focused, well-coordinated effort, particularly as it relates to post-conflict situations. The United Nations plays an important role in this regard, as United Nations peacekeeping operations have been instrumental in helping countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.

Over the past decade, Cambodia has contributed around 5,000 Blue Helmet troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations worldwide. Partnering with the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and other actors, Cambodia's Mine Action Centre has developed a holistic approach to assisting

and supporting victims by implementing demining projects with a strong community-development focus, thus contributing to a safer and more secure world.

Cambodia remains deeply committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes. In line with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, Cambodia strongly believes that the principles of respect for the sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity of States, as well as non-interference in their domestic affairs, play an important part in building peace that lasts long into the future. We also recognize the important role of women in conflict prevention, which is an important contribution to sustaining peace.

As we move forward, we need to ensure that any and all reforms of the United Nations peacebuilding efforts lead to a coherent approach to sustaining peace. To this end, we must ensure that sustainable financing is available. We should strengthen links among the relevant funds. Serious discussions should be held in this regard, including with the private sector and international financial institutions.

As we look forward to the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2020, Cambodia emphasizes that peacebuilding efforts require robust structures that help avoid fragmentation. All parts of the United Nations must work together towards one goal — preventing conflict and sustaining peace worldwide. Sustainable financing and an effective response on the ground, together with effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, can help us to attain the vision set out in the Preamble of United Nations Charter — "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

In conclusion, we welcome the draft resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to be adopted today (A/72/L.49). Cambodia stands ready to work with all its partners towards the attainment of this goal.

Mr. Coulibaly (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Mali remains convinced that, despite the scale and nature of the threats to peace, its sustainability is a challenge that is within our reach, in particular through strategic and operational partnerships among national Governments, the United Nations and other stakeholders, including international organizations, international financial institutions, development banks and civil-society organizations. Sustainable and social development, sustained economic growth, good governance and poverty eradication, on an inclusive basis, constitute a parallel and even an indispensable prerequisite for the sustainability of peace.

As the Assembly is aware, my country is engaged in a process to end the crisis, embodied in the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the implementation of which is the only guarantee of lasting peace in Mali and in the Sahel region. In this regard, the establishment of interim authorities in the northern regions of the country, the effectiveness of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the reform of the security sector are strong actions that deserve to be highlighted.

In its determination to meet the challenge of sustainable peace at the national level, Mali benefits from the support of its bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations through its specialized agencies, in particular the Peacebuilding Fund, which, beyond Mali's borders, invests in supporting peace in the Liptako-Gourma region. Moreover, the Group of Five for the Sahel has been universally welcomed as a tool for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region and beyond. In that regard, we believe the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/72/707) are quite relevant.

Mr. Mayong Onon (Malaysia): Malaysia joins other speakers in commending the President of the General Assembly for convening this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We wish to align ourselves with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Venezuela (see A/72/PV.83) on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We commend the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania, the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations on draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by the General Assembly. We are also pleased with the comprehensive, transparent and inclusive approach undertaken by the co-facilitators, and the flexibility demonstrated by all delegations during the negotiations on the draft resolution.

Malaysia welcomes the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, such as resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and resolution 70/304, on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of

disputes, conflict prevention and resolution. The landmark identical resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture review, adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in April 2016 — resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively — provided an impetus to international interventions on prevention and peacebuilding.

Today we are focusing our attention on sustaining peace, as highlighted by the Secretary-General and the Organization, which constitutes a paradigm shift in how we think about sustaining peace and how we address and resolve conflicts around the globe. In that regard, Malaysia believes that sustaining peace should be built on a more coordinated, integrated and inclusive system-wide approach by all United Nations bodies, together with all stakeholders — particularly women and youth, regional and subregional organizations, civil societies and non-governmental organizations, the media, the private sector and international financial institutions — in a way that ensures national ownership.

My delegation would like to underscore the need for peacebuilding and sustaining peace to be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the various ongoing United Nations reform efforts. The eradication of hunger and poverty, as well as economic revitalization and stabilization, must be among the core objectives of peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives.

We are of the view that building lasting peace also requires predictable, sustained and adequate financing. It is worthwhile to invest in and maintain peace. Indeed, peace is a fragile thing. Ultimately, sustaining peace requires the courage and political will of all stakeholders. Malaysia, together with the international community, will do its part to further this noble endeavour.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this high-level event devoted to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. My delegation is very pleased.

Today's debate is essentially aimed at encouraging a genuine structural transformation of the peace and security architecture of the United Nations. That necessary transformation is an opportunity for our Organization and our countries to adapt our mechanisms for promoting peace and security to a constantly evolving global context of crises and conflicts.

While it is true that the efforts of the United Nations continue to improve, we note that the threats to international peace and security are increasingly numerous and elaborate, sometimes taking unpredictable forms. That is why Gabon firmly believes that prevention remains an indispensable tool that must be at the centre of our actions if we are to build lasting peace. Our collective efforts in prevention have so far been scarcely visible, poorly adapted and poorly funded. Indeed, the scarce and inadequate resources allocated to our Organization's actions for prevention and peacebuilding have contributed substantially to the resurgence of crises in times of transition or to the emergence of new conflicts. In that connection, Gabon welcomes the Secretary-General's willingness to support United Nations prevention and peacebuilding mechanisms through adequate and predictable funding.

It is also important to enhance the synergy between the sustainable development and the peace and security pillars of the United Nations. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is indeed the best way to ensure peacebuilding and sustaining peace globally. We must tackle the root causes of conflict, including inequality, poverty and youth unemployment. That, in our view, is the best weapon for peace. The effective participation of women and young people at all levels of the various mechanisms and institutions for conflict prevention and resolution is vital. Financial, material and technological support for the implementation of the SDGs is essential to the promotion of lasting peace, particularly in developing countries in general and African countries in particular.

The financing of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be seen as a necessity for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. That funding must also enable the capacity-building of countries that, like Gabon, are facing new security threats, such as poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking.

Effective consideration of the new challenges in this process of restructuring the United Nations peace architecture should make it possible to strengthen it and adopt a more comprehensive approach. Such an approach also requires the consolidation of partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in order to bolster their resilience and that of their member States. That is the purpose of the initiatives led by Gabon as current Chair of the Economic Community of Central African

States, whose objective is to make the Organization more efficient and effective, and capable of meeting the requirements of lasting peace.

Finally, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, combined with population growth, are significantly reducing access to existing resources for most people. That situation could become a source of instability in certain regions in the near future. It is up to us to begin to jointly reflect on the establishment of prevention mechanisms in order to face what could one day be a threat to international peace and security.

The fight against climate change is an important tool for the sustainability of peace. Gabon intends to pursue its efforts to mobilize the necessary resources to curb the horrors of climate change and push for appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures.

In conclusion, peace and sustainable development are two sides of the same coin. Achieving our climate and sustainable development goals is essential if we are to make peace sustainable.

Mr. Morejón Pazmiño (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We find ourselves in one of the most complex stages of our history, which is why we must tackle the root causes that have led to an increase in conflicts and threats and created a more dangerous environment for United Nations efforts to maintain peace. That is why President Lajčák's convening of this meeting is so timely and I thank him personally.

Over the past few days, we have heard a series of very timely and appropriate statements with a shared goal. We must naturally pursue all paths likely to lead to peace and prevent war. We cannot speak of peacebuilding while hunger and poverty persist. Peace and security are linked to sustainable development, and the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is key to achieving peace. That is why there must be political commitment to ensuring financing, technical cooperation and technology transfer.

We must, however, lead by example. Ecuador, on 20 September 2017, was one of the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as it took seriously the readiness of all of society to prevent further manifestations of that scourge that leads to war, death and destruction. Ecuador maintains a key principle — achieving total and complete disarmament.

In statements made over the past few days, we have heard some very important examples. The President of the Republic of Colombia was kind enough to very briefly mention Ecuador in the context of the peace process. I am grateful that he did so, because it gives me the opportunity to explain a bit further regarding the relation between our two brotherly nations.

For more than 40 years, Ecuador has been consistent and united with regard to the Colombian peace process. We have taken in more than 62,000 Colombian citizens as refugees. We have taken them in as a gesture of solidarity. We have no refugee camps. That is why these refugees have been included in the social development of my country. They are always welcome. We also have a list of more than 200,000 Colombian citizens that have sought refuge in my country. Those cases are being reviewed. We have been very supportive in offering our capital to host peace conversations between the Ejército de Liberación Nacional and the Government of Colombia. We have done it very willingly with a view to achieving the greater good — peace. That peace affects the entire region, not simply one country.

Recently, we suffered a setback to the peace process. Three Ecuadorian journalists were abducted by dissident cells of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, which operate in a lethal combination with drug traffickers. They were assassinated for no reason, except as a reminder that they are untouchable. Such actions are unacceptable. A few days ago, an Ecuadorian couple that ventured close to the border with our neighbouring country was abducted. We need to nip such incidents in the bud and prevent fear from taking root in our territory.

In 1998, Ecuador signed a peace agreement with its neighbour, Peru, that put an end to a 100-year border issue between our States and cemented a sincere and united friendship that seeks only development. Investments in both countries have increased more than 3,000 per cent since the signing of the peace agreement in 1998. With that example, I simply mean to show how countries like Ecuador contribute to peacebuilding in a practical and apparent manner.

Finally, I note that the identical resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in April 2016 (resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016), respectively) offer a broader view of peacebuilding and strengthen the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, which enables us to

appreciate efforts made in that regard and to focus on the renewed commitment of the United Nations and its primary legislative organs in facing the challenges to building lasting peace. Ecuador will always be ready to act in furtherance of that goal.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina thanks the President of the General Assembly for organizing this timely high-level meeting and once again welcomes the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

We believe that this report is in line with the general approach and recommendations included in his proposals for the structural reform of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, and development and administration, with a view to significantly improving the performance of the Organization.

Argentina supports the idea that the United Nations should adopt a holistic and inclusive strategic approach to activities related to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, sustainable peace and development — one that includes women and young people as key actors in that transformation. Both the proposed reform and the report submitted can help to overcome the fragmentation of the Organization's work by increasing the coherence and coordination of activities under the different pillars and in all phases of conflicts, in line with the sustainable peace narrative.

In that regard, for example, Argentina understands that the Organization's peace missions, as part of the United Nations system, could assist host States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, greatly enhancing their contribution to peace and development almost without requiring additional resources. Peace missions are well positioned to address the underlying causes of conflict and even to identify possible actions that could contribute to sustainable development. That role should be carried out with a perspective and design that takes the 2030 Agenda into account from the outset so as to collaborate with the host countries in reaching their Sustainable Development Goals.

We reiterate the need to pay more attention to the root causes of conflicts and the importance of finding solutions based on national responsibility by prioritizing prevention and the maintenance of peace and focusing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, we support the idea of strengthening the functions of the Peacebuilding Support Office through enhancing its role as a liaison among the three pillars and as a partner in United Nations initiatives and instruments.

We recognize the need to secure adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding activities, particularly through the Peacebuilding Fund. In that connection, we hope to continue discussing relevant options as presented by the Secretary-General in the framework of the work of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, Argentina has begun to voluntarily contribute to the Peacebuilding Commission as a show of support for its important work and to peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities in general.

Financing for peacebuilding and development activities are linked. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing. In that regard, South-South and triangular cooperation are important examples of how different developing economies can be mutually beneficial. That is why we should consider similar systems when financing peacebuilding activities.

Finally, we express our support for the draft procedural resolution (A/72/L.49), to be adopted this evening, so as to enable the Secretary-General to further the implementation of the proposed reforms in ongoing consultation with the Member States.

Mr. Al-Harthy (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My country's delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General and to welcome his vision, as reflected in his report (A/72/707). It is a good report as it looks towards the future and represents a road map for the United Nations to deal with crises. We support the reforms that he is carrying out in that regard.

When we talk about the United Nations and the role it plays, we must remember that the International Organization was founded essentially in order to maintain peace and security. The current broad scope of the tasks and the work of the United Nations should not be at the expense of its main objectives, which are the same as those being discussed at this high-level meeting. Had the United Nations concentrated on preventive diplomacy and the prevention of wars and conflicts, it would have spared the world a great deal of tragedy, loss and expense, and it would have spared

great efforts and spared funds that could have been used to implement other objectives in the field of sustainable development, inter alia.

The foreign policy of the Sultanate of Oman takes into consideration the noble principles of the United Nations. Since His Majesty the Sultan assumed power in 1970, my country has worked hard to play a positive role in helping to avoid and prevent conflicts. It cooperates with the United Nations and peace-loving nations in an attempt to solve problems and conflicts by diplomatic and peaceful means.

Peacebuilding and sustainable peace can be achieved only through national consensus and the participation of all national parties. The United Nations, as a foreign party, should support countries in facilitating peace processes in creative ways, according to the circumstances of each country. We cannot speak about peacebuilding and sustaining peace without talking about the Security Council, which shoulders the main responsibility within the United Nations of maintaining international peace and security. It can participate effectively in diplomatic efforts to solve crises, peacebuilding and sustaining peace by using its influence to defuse and end conflicts.

In the broader sense and at the international level, the United Nations, with the participation of us all, particularly the influential States, should deal with the political issues and problems suffered by certain countries and societies. These must be addressed in a just and consistent manner, in line with international law, and by avoiding double standards, which are harmful to peacebuilding.

In conclusion, the United Nations and the role it plays, especially in the area of security and peace, are mistrusted in many parts of the world. The time has therefore come for the Organization to make an important change in order to eliminate that impression. Hopefully, this meeting will serve as a first step towards reaching that end.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great pleasure and honour for the delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to address the General Assembly in order to contribute to this important debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. At the outset, we wish to welcome the high representatives of States Members of the United Nations and other multilateral organizations of civil society and of the private sector. It is an honour to participate alongside them in this critical debate.

The complexity and prolongation of existing conflicts and its links with violent extremism, terrorism and organized crime make it necessary for the international community and particularly the United Nations to explore how to restructure the architecture of the Organization in order to best address the root causes of those conflicts. In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea notes and acknowledges the vision and efforts of Secretary-General Guterres to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as described in his reports (A/72/525 and A/72/772), in which he presents his proposal for restructuring the Organization's pillar of peace and security and the creation of two new departments — political affairs and peacebuilding — and his report (A/72/707) on progress made and remaining challenges with a view to supporting peacebuilding and sustaining peace worldwide.

Specifically, we express our appreciation and welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to integrate a gender-based and youth-inclusive perspective, in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security, as well as resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security. We also agree that investing in inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable development is the best way to prevent violent conflicts. We welcome the proposed reforms to the development system of the United Nations and the peacebuilding architecture to make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development central to those efforts.

As the Secretary-General states in his report, peacebuilding is, above all, the responsibility of Member States. In that regard, we commend the unique work and role of the Peacebuilding Commission for its support for peacebuilding worldwide, particularly for its initiatives in Africa. We therefore understand the rationale for the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. We believe, however, that greater clarity is needed about the potential repercussions that the restructuring of the three pillars of the United Nations–peace and security, human rights and development–could have, in particular the restructuring of the peace and security and peacebuilding pillar and the implications that this might have for the principle of the sovereignty of countries and the equitable, just and geographical

representation of Member States in the proposed new structures.

We understand the urgency of and the need for reform, and we firmly believe that investing in conflict prevention, as described in the Charter of the United Nations, is the best strategy to put an end to conflict in a peaceful and lasting way, which is why it is crucial not to act too hastily in such processes.

For these reasons, we should like to request greater clarity, including in the form of practical examples and tables, which would help us to better understand these reforms and predict their potential impact at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, particularly in areas of the world that risk becoming blind spots on the global agenda, such as, for example, the Central African region.

In that regard, we would appreciate having more frequent and substantive informal meetings, with practical examples, as we await a more comprehensive report on the reform of the peace and security pillar later on during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Itegboje (Nigeria): Let me at the outset thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General for his remarks.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

This meeting is being convened at a time when the global community is facing unprecedented threats, geopolitical tensions, social dislocation, cyberattacks, the threat of climate change and terrorism, inter alia. Nigeria has had its fair share of such crises, including when, in another vicious attack, Boko Haram insurgents annexed 14 local governments in Borno state, in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. However, upon his assumption of office, in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari ensured the recovery of the annexed territories, and today, Boko Haram insurgents no longer hold any territory in Nigeria.

General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, addressed the approach of the United Nations to peace by adopting a long-term perspective and focusing on prevention. The resolutions also call for a broader concept that encompasses peacebuilding and links peace and security with development, human rights and humanitarian action. Sustaining peace also emphasizes inclusive dialogue, mediation, accountable institutions, good governance, access to justice and gender equality.

Nigeria is of the opinion that while sustaining peace should not be seen as an infringement on sovereignty, it should also not be used as a pretext for infringing on the sovereignty of Member States, as the centrality of a national and inclusive ownership of sustaining peace cannot be overemphasized. The emphasis on prevention is commendable, and we recommend that the peacebuilding architecture should have, as a component, an early-warning system that should be accompanied by an early-action system.

We also wish to stress the importance of ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, exploring innovative financing solutions, as well as options for assessed and voluntary funding, as requested by the twin resolutions. In this regard, the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund cannot be overemphasized.

We call for closer collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional initiatives related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are good examples of regional and subregional initiatives that have made great strides in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace through collaborative efforts.

We wish to note that draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by the General Assembly, is a key development that will confirm the strong commitment of its member States to the cause of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Nigeria has consistently been in the vanguard of supporting and participating in international efforts at conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace — subregionally, regionally and globally. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has been an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions, deploying military contingents, unarmed military observers, military staff officers, formed police units, police advisers and civilian experts to more than 25 United Nations missions. According to a 2016 report published by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Nigeria is the

country contributing the 14th-largest number of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Nigeria also shares the view that the maintenance of human rights is critical to sustaining peace and has therefore embarked on mainstreaming human rights elements into its security architecture. In that context, progress has been made in enhancing civil-military relations and establishing legislative oversight over the security sector in relation to defence spending, procurement and general budgetary matters. Efforts have also been stepped up to create a better partnership between civilians and the armed forces.

The national security reform has also had substantial linkages with the regional approach to good governance and the promotion of the rule of law. This is manifested in Nigeria's support of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture and the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles, which call for the promotion of multiparty democracy and representative governance in the West African subregion.

Nigeria also believes that ensuring the meaningful participation of women and girls in all areas of society is vital. Gender equality yields greater economic growth and higher standards of living; women's participation in peacebuilding also helps prevent any relapse into conflict. The Government has rolled out its second national action plan, which provides an overarching framework that has become the Nigerian model for addressing emerging security issues and social gaps and ensuring that substantial contributions are made by women to peacebuilding and the maintenance of peace in the country.

The issue of youth unemployment plays a part in violent conflict and the rise of global terrorism. The Nigerian Government has therefore established a number of interventionist programmes to tackle this problem under the umbrella of the N-Power Youth Employment Programme. We are also pursuing our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and the overarching social and economic goals of Agenda 2063 of the African Union by launching an ambitious three-year, medium-term economic development strategy, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. More importantly, corruption is being tackled headlong, as it is seen as a major obstacle to the economic growth of the country.

In conclusion, we commend the Secretary-General's efforts to bring together his reform proposals on the United Nations system, including peace and security, development and internal management, as well as proposals on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We look forward to an outcome document that will feed into the next review of the peacebuilding architecture, in 2020. Nigeria will continue to support international efforts aimed at peacebuilding and sustaining peace across the world. In order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we call on the rest of the world to emulate and join Africa in its ambitious programme to silence the guns by the year 2020.

Mrs. Taremba (Zimbabwe): Let me join others in commending the President of the General Assembly for having convened this very important meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is my sincere hope that our deliberations will provide us with the opportunity to share best practices and exchange ideas on building and preserving peace. This dialogue provides us with a platform to renew our commitment to conflict prevention and to examine ways in which the United Nations can effectively assist Member States in preventing the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

The constantly changing dynamics of the threats to international peace and security confronting the world today require us to examine our tools for building, preserving and sustaining peace. More investment in conflict prevention is needed to free resources towards development. Zimbabwe firmly believes that achieving sustainable development holds the key to sustaining peace. In that vein, it is our considered view that investing in development is the best form of conflict prevention.

The twin resolutions on sustaining peace adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in 2016 — resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016), respectively — clearly acknowledge that Member States have the primary responsibility to build and sustain peace. In our view, national ownership is the main cornerstone for peacebuilding, and efforts to preserve peace are more effective when they are all-inclusive. In that regard, the United Nations must provide coherent, comprehensive and coordinated support, working with

Member States and other stakeholders before, during and after conflicts.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which further develops how the partnership between the United Nations and its Member States can be strengthened to enhance the building and sustaining of peace. It also outlines an ambitious plan of action on how to build and sustain peace. It is therefore important that the United Nations work with Member States across the three pillars of the United Nations to achieve our shared goal of sustaining peace.

According to a recent United Nations-World Bank report, more resources are spent on addressing the aftermath of conflicts than on preventing them from flaring up and escalating. However, the economic benefits of prevention far outweigh the cost of funding peacekeeping operations. In our view, predictable and sustainable funding is integral to sustaining peace through all stages of the conflict cycle. The options for the financing of peacebuilding activities set out in the Secretary-General's report need to be carefully examined in order to address the imbalance between spending on conflict and investing in peace.

The recommendations contained in the report need further consideration through the appropriate intergovernmental processes and approval by the General Assembly. We look forward to an in-depth discussion on practical steps towards building sustainable peace.

Turning to the recent peaceful transition process in Zimbabwe, which in November 2017 ushered in a new political dispensation, it is heartening to note that the leadership has set the country on a new development trajectory that has generated hope and excitement as to what the future holds. The Government has put in place a clear institutional framework to guide the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We wish to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of our people for a better life by addressing the economic and social drivers of conflict in a more comprehensive manner and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

The Government has also committed itself to a credible and violence-free election. As we prepare the groundwork for the watershed elections to be held in the next few months, we are cognizant of the important role that youth and women could play in ensuring a peaceful, participatory and inclusive electoral process.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

Before adjourning, let me remind members that action on draft resolution A/72/L.49 will be taken after we exhaust the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.